

MINUTES OF MEETING

**Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board – May 27, 2020
Ada County Parks and Waterways Administration building**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Hilarie Engle, Chris Miller, Chuck Vertrees, Kari Kostka, Emily Reaves via Webex,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scott Frey

STAFF PRESENT: Mike Edwards, Candy Hahlbeck, Scott Koberg

OTHER: Brent Moore; Development Services via Webex, Commissioner Patrick Malloy

INTRODUCTION:

K. Kostka called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m. No conflicts of interest were declared by Advisory Board members.

H. Engle moved to approve the February 26th minutes. C. Vertrees Seconded. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

ELECTIONS:

After a short discussion, E. Reaves nominated K. Kostka to continue as Chair. H. Engle seconded. Motion passed.

C. Vertrees nominated C. Miller as Vice Chair. H. Engle seconded. Motion passed.

SUBCOMITTEE REPORTS:

H. Engle will take over as Chair of the Oregon Trail Subcommittee.

C. Miller reported that he talked with Mike Shuman, owner of Shu's Running, for recommendations on trails runners they could speak with. He was provided with the names of 3 people who are all users of the Bike Park and would be able to represent the trail running community. This was in mid-March and nothing has been done since. C. Miller would still like to meet with them face to face. If it's not possible, perhaps a Zoom meeting could be set up. K. Kostka offered to help facilitate this meeting with her Zoom account, if needed.

C. Miller suggested, at a later meeting, that all the subcommittees summarize where they are at. K. Kostka agreed it would be a good idea.

E. Reaves commented that she has been out at Oregon Trail when all parking spots have been filled. She inquired if there was any consideration to doing the survey again. It would be an opportune time with so many folks using the Oregon Trail to get additional feedback. M. Edwards responded that he liked the idea of doing another survey out there.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

S. Koberg reported that Parks was considered an essential service over the last 3 months. The properties we manage have seen heavy use lately do to users being home. Parks and pathways are a tremendous value year-round, but the facilities funded by the county have really proven their worth. Parks staff is on the front lines when it comes to being in contact with the public. It's difficult to keep the 6-foot distance but staff is trying to model the proper behavior when on the job wearing logoed attire. Currently, staff members are not allowed to drive in one vehicle together. Instead, they caravan to a site. We are doing everything we can to protect our staff. If a member of our staff tests positive, it shuts down our entire department because we interact in close spaces despite the large properties we manage.

Ridge to Rivers has a couple of traffic counters with visitation up 40 percent from last year. The Greenbelt traffic has easily doubled. S. Koberg hopes that, as members of the Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board members continue to model appropriate behavior and encourage others to do the same. C. Miller inquired about the traffic counter and their locations. S. Koberg responded that the traffic counters on the Greenbelt are managed by COMPASS and we have one on Eckert past the bridge. It's a physical counter that determines whether it's a cyclist, runner or a vehicle. The trailhead traffic counter is near the Foothills Learning Center and one near Table Rock. K. Kostka inquired if this data is posted online. S. Koberg responded that COMPASS posts their data online. H. Engle responded that Ridge to Rivers posts that information on their Facebook page. S. Koberg was going to look into this and report back.

Four seasonal employees have been hired. 2 are with M. Edwards on the Trail Crew and 2 are in the park. We will continue to on board seasonals for a total of 14-15. We will continue to ramp up keeping protocols in mind through the staged re-opening plan. There are a lot of business specific protocols, seasonal staffing onboarding protocols and mass events and gatherings protocols. We are trying to figure out what our business model looks like.

The Expo Idaho Greenbelt Pathway is now complete. Because of COVID-19 we originally didn't get any responsive bidders to the asphalt outreach. We had to go through a secondary process to select a contractor we could work with to get this job done. That ended up being Central Paving. We also contracted with Meridian Fence to remove and install fence. This project was finished on time and on budget and opened Friday before Memorial Day weekend. The entire project cost was \$250,000.00 for three quarters of a mile of Greenbelt. The public was notified of the opening via Facebook.

The Barber Park Pathways and Parking project was in fee negotiations with Quadrant Consulting. We could not come to terms with them. We have since moved on to the second responsive bidder which was Breckon Land Design. We are still working with them on fee negotiations and hope to have a contract soon.

Parks and Waterways Fiscal Year 2021 budget was submitted about 3 weeks ago. Included in that are the first three phases of construction using fund balance in the amount of \$650,000.00 for the Barber Park Pathways and Parking Project. We are hoping to receive support for this project.

Revenue streams for Parks includes rental of the Barber Park Education and Event Center and Exclusive Alcohol Provider contract for the event center that we have a revenue share of. We were forced to cancel 46 events between March 16th and June 26th. This is one of the busiest times of the year for events. We estimate that we are losing \$62,000 in revenue from rentals and alcohol sales. We aren't sure what stage 4 of Idaho Rebounds look like but there is some guidance starting June 27th. This includes guidance for events that are between 50-250 people. Physically distance people at a wedding which may be attended by elderly and folks from out of town is difficult. This is why the Board of County Commissioners decided to cancel all events through June 26th. There are a lot of questions as events start up again on June 27th.

The Boise River Float Season is set to begin soon. We are following the protocols for outdoor pools, splash parks and waterparks. There will be an unofficial float season where folks can float at their own risk. We are going to attempt to run an official float season where we offer the shuttle service, rentals and charge fee parking. We aren't sure what that looks like. It's a big part of how we generate revenue here. If we can run it responsibly and put appropriate measure in place and with the Board of County Commissioners' support, we plan to have an official float season. We have many challenges ahead. C. Miller inquired what some of the ideas we are considering implementing to make the float season happen safely. S. Koberg responded that measures to protect employees is a big one right now that includes temperature monitoring, physical distancing and face masks. S. Koberg is waiting on a list of items the rental concession plans to put into place. He will review this. One thing he was considering was having each rentable item pre reserved and rented only once per day. The rest of the time is spent cleaning/sanitizing equipment. There is also the rental windows to consider. We are looking at plexi glass, contactless rental and floor markings for 6 foot distance. The shuttle busses are also tricky. There has been discussion on having all drivers on every day and just running more frequent shuttles with half the amount of people in them. The air stations probably will not run this year because of the frequency of use and not being able to keep up with sanitation. C. Miller inquired if we would

consider not renting boats to the public. S. Koberg responded that the renting of the boats, fee parking and shuttles is all part of the official float season. An easy decision would be to not have an official float season. We are leaning towards using protocols to make the official float season happen. There is a potential of limiting the amount of vehicles in the parking lot on a daily basis. At the highest volume, we see almost 1000 vehicles park per day. We are hopeful for an official season, but there are many protocols that will need to be put into place.

OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS COORDINATOR REPORT:

M. Edwards updated the Board on his activities. M. Edwards and his employees work closely on the trail. It's easy to stay 6 feet apart, but they are constantly changing tools. He has implemented protocols where they each have their own McCloud, rakes and shovels which are color coded. They wipe down during the day and again the next morning. When large equipment is run, they make sure to wipe them down after use. It has slowed things down, but the protocols are doable.

Pre COVID-19, Oregon Trail has several wildlife kiosks that weren't really appropriate. M. Edwards wanted to update these kiosks to include more Oregon Trail history. He has the kiosk with the women's diaries updated. He is still working on the Kelton Trail kiosk. Most recently M. Edwards and his team have gone out and cleared out the grass using a weed burner. At our last meeting in February, M. Edwards was just finishing up on the Comprehensive Plan. This has already gone through the public process in the past. An item we are trying to install at Oregon Trail is a compost toilet. A double vaulted toilet would be more appropriate because of the volume of people visiting the park. Update of the trail maps are almost complete. This will go in the parking lot and on the other end in Columbia Village. C. Miller inquired if there was any progress with Simplot. M. Edwards responded that there was great response before the pandemic hit but not much since. H. Engle inquired about the rocks in the parking lot. Are there any thoughts about putting up some temporary signs that say not to climb on the rocks. M. Edwards thinks this is a good idea. S. Koberg added that since the pandemic, there has been more camping and illicit trail building on privately owned land in the Foothills. C. Miller inquired if there were plans to put trail signs up. M. Edwards responded that there were but some of these signs would be on Simplot property. He doesn't want to go forward until he gets the final go-ahead from Simplot.

There has been more unauthorized trail building at the Bike Park than he has ever seen. He did catch some kids that were building a single track off Junk Yard. He asked them to get ahold of him if they wanted to help with maintenance. He also wanted to be able to show them proper trail building. They ignored him and went on to build more trail. Ada County Sheriff was called in. They talked with the parents. There were no charges brought. Maintenance includes cleaning out all the drains. Treasure Valley Traverse was difficult as usual. A skid steer was purchased thanks to a supplemental grant to the budget. This is a huge time saver. The Flow Trail was rebuilt this year. He took some time to see how the jumps are projecting people. The ramp below the Fly Over Bridge on Junk Yard isn't quite as steep now. The biggest project was redoing Rabbit Run. It's a very sandy, and erosive soil. Several new drains were put in on the ridge along Rabbit. Right now, it's in the best shape its ever been in. Shake n' Bake is also being worked on, fixing the drainages and ruts.

The high water at Hubbard is starting to recede. They haven't done a lot of work out there this year but it looks pretty good. The Great Horned Owls have returned.

OTHER ITEMS

K. Kostka invited members to suggest other guests to attend our meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

K. Kostka adjourned the meeting at 12:11p.m.